

Early Years Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds



How you
can get help
with the cost
of childcare

The 10 Year Childcare Strategy 2004 sets out plans to create early learning and childcare services which:

- help every child develop to their full potential
- help parents get back into work
- allow parents to make informed choices about their children's care and their family life.

What is the Early Years Entitlement?

From the term after your child's third birthday until they start school, they are entitled to up to 15 hours of free early learning and child care each week for up to 38 weeks a year during school term time. The hours can take place in nurseries (including school nursery classes), playgroups, pre-schools or at certain childminders. Some out of school clubs will also be able to offer part of this entitlement.

The full 15 hours must be used over at least 3 days a week and you can use a minimum of 2.5 hours and a maximum of 10 hours a day between 8am and 6pm. A maximum of 12.5 hours if the entitlement is needed over only two days. You can also share the 15 hours between two providers. Ask your childcare provider how they are offering the 15 hour entitlement.

How will this benefit my family?

- Free early learning and care gives your child a head start when they go to school. Singing songs, playing games with letters and numbers and having fun with other children help to prepare your child for school and for life ahead.





- The learning and experiences your child has when being cared for help to shape them and their development.
- A Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) survey of parents using the Early Years Entitlement found that parents:
 - were overwhelmingly positive about the effect of early years education and care on their child
 - saw a range of benefits in their child such as improved social and communication skills, access to a wide range of activities and increased cultural awareness
 - said that they benefited from using the entitlement - just under half said that access to free childcare meant that they were able to work.

When can my child have their entitlement?

Child born between:	Entitled from:
1 April and 31 August	Start of autumn term after their third birthday until they go to school
1 September and 31 December	Start of spring term after their third birthday until they go to school
1 January and 31 March	Start of summer term after their third birthday until they go to school

What should I do?

- Check the table to see if your child is eligible for the Early Years Entitlement.
- If your child is eligible make sure that you are using all the hours you need and are entitled to.
- Talk to your childcare provider about what you need and how you can get the Early Years Entitlement.
- Get a copy of *0-5 Years – The Essential Guide to Early Learning and Childcare For You and Your Family*. You can download a copy at <http://tinyurl.com/0-5Years> or call **0845 60 222 60** for a hard copy.
- Visit our website at www.devon.gov.uk/disc or call our helpdesk on **01392 385530**. Always speak to your childcare provider before calling the helpdesk.



Is there any other help I can get?

The cost of childcare can seem daunting, but there's help available. You may be able to take advantage of free childcare places, tax credits, childcare vouchers and other benefits. Talk to your childcare provider, call DISC, Devon's Family Information Service on **0845 155 1013** or visit www.devon.gov.uk/disc for more information.

